

Jones County Autism Foundations Training

Lisa Bryant – bio

Ms. Bryant's first introduction to Autism was as a classroom teacher in Germany (1984). Through the years since then, she has worked with individuals with autism and participated in Autism Training. In 1998, Boswell Regional Center (BRC) opened the first Intermediate Care Facility Group Home for eight males with Autism. She served as Director of the Community ICF Group Home and served as a member of the Autism Task Force with Mississippi's Department of Mental Health. While serving on the Autism Task Force, training was developed and presented across the state to build awareness and educate professionals, para-professionals, families and communities. In 2012, Ms. Bryant became the Director of Autism Services at BRC. As a volunteer, she serves as an Advocate for families who are having difficulty getting the supports needed for their child with Autism. In addition to presenting with the Autism Task Force, she has presented at the Southeastern AAIDD Conference, the Mississippi AAIDD Conference and provided Autism training to the BRC staff and private providers within our state. In October 2014, Ms. Bryant was awarded the Kinloch Gill Memorial Award at the Mental Health/IDD Joint Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi. Currently, she is furthering her knowledge through various life-long learning opportunities.

Pam Dollar – Bio

Pam currently serves as Executive Director of the Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities and MSPTI (Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center). She is a member of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel, the Mississippi State Rehabilitation Council, Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee, Boswell Autism Training Curriculum Task Force and serves on numerous other advisory boards and committees related to disability issues. She travels throughout Mississippi speaking to various groups about disabilities, special education and parental issues and concerns. She resides in Magee, Mississippi with her husband and young adult son with autism. For over two decades, she has advocated at a state and national level for services and supports to facilitate full inclusion of people with disabilities in schools, communities and the workforce.

Peggy Kelly – Bio

Peggy Kelly has over 15 years experience in Special Education and Assistive Technology from classrooms in the juvenile justice system and in inner city schools, to rural and distance learning environments. She is a professional who has worked with all age groups of individuals with disabilities and their families, utilizing and mentoring other professionals to apply person-centered goal-oriented programs into practice and collaborating with team members to ensure maximum success. Ms. Kelly is presently the Program Coordinator for Autism Services and Assistive Technology for Boswell Regional Center. In her current position, she coordinates and maintains open communication between all departments and programs at BRC regarding autism services and assistive technology, collaborates with multi-disciplinary teams regarding assistive technology, provides staff development regarding positive and best-practice techniques to improve interactions and understanding of working

with individuals with ID/DD.

Shirley Miller - bio

For over 30 years, Shirley Miller has served in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. She has taken on roles from special education consultant to training specialist for the Mississippi Parent Advocacy Center to program director for Mississippi Adolescent Center, which comprise only a small selection she has filled as a positive influence within the Department of Mental Health and throughout the state of Mississippi.

A native Mississippian, Ms. Miller graduated from Mississippi State University. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the Arc of MS, vice-chairperson for the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel, vice-chairperson for the State Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Intervention, member of the Board of Directors for the Vety Special Arts of Mississippi, NACC delegate for the MS Council on Developmental Disabilities, chairperson of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and chairperson for the Hinds/Rankin Foster Grandparent Advisory Board.

Crystal Toche – bio

Crystal Toche is a graduate of William Carey University in Counseling Psychology. She is currently a behavioral health specialist for Boswell Regional Center in the Autism Services department. Ms. Toche currently holds a Mississippi mental health therapist certification. Professionally, she has been working in the mental health field for over eight years. Ms. Toche started her employment working her way through college as a direct care worker. After receiving her Bachelor's Degree, she then moved into a case manager position. As a case manager, Ms. Toche decided to enroll in graduate school. In graduate school, she gained professional experience through her internship at an inpatient hospital program. Since joining the Autism Services department at Boswell Regional Center, Ms. Toche has been involved with Autism training for employees, specifically focusing on Judevine techniques

Lee Underwood - bio

Lee Underwood has over 25 years of experience working with individuals with intellectual disabilities and behavior disorders in Georgia, North Carolina, and Mississippi. He has a Master's of Social Work degree from the University of Georgia, and presently serves as a Behavior Consultant in the ID/DD Waiver Behavior Support and Intervention Services program at Hudspeth Regional Center (HRC). Lee has worked in fifty-eight school districts in Mississippi either as a representative of HRC, or as a private consultant. He has served children K-1.2 and adults with ASD at HRC and throughout the state, and is currently a member of the Autism Task Force. His areas of interest in autism include positive behavior support, family support, and helping individuals with ASD transition from residential programs to their least restrictive settings.